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ABSTRACT

An annotated bibliography lists 10 books on the relationship between second language skills and careers. Some of the books address specific career areas such as intelligence, international trade, and world affairs, and the others focus more generally on career awareness, exploration, training, and development as they relate to foreign language ability. (MSE)

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Books on Foreign Languages and Careers

Eugene C. Torbert

Illinois Foreign Language Teachers Association Newsletter, Summer 1989

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FL Teachers Association Newsletter
Summer 1989

Books on Foreign Languages and Careers

Eugene C. Torbert

Foreign language teachers and school counselors would be well served if one of our professional organizations were to publish an annual report on careers and foreign languages which would indicate with a high degree of specificity what languages are most in den nd, what proficiency levels are needed, what combinations of skills are needed, e.g. television marketing and Spanish, which industries and organizations have these needs, and which government agencies have such needs. When we can document the needs, we can get more support for quality foreign language instruction from our

administrators, and from state and federal governments. We can also develop curricular programs that relate better to our increasingly interrelated, interdependent world.

Until we have such an annual publication, we will have to rely on books and articles, sometimes published at widely-spaced intervals. A description of some of the books currently available follows, given in chronological order.

* Sherif, June L. *Careers in Foreign Languages: A Handbook.* New York: Regents Publishing Co., 1975. 228 pp.

This is the most comprehensive book of its type and is still in print. It serves both high school and college students. It contains general recommendations for language study, a description of language families, helpful information on where to find data on foreign language programs and degree requirements at colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad, aids and resources for independent study, definitions of proficiency, addresses for scholarships and loans, and a listing of university programs in TEFL. The author gives recommendations regarding overseas employment. There is a large section on occupational opportunities in the U.S. government covering a total of 29 pages.

A brief section on international organizations follows. The next 45 pages contain information on specialized occupations that require language skills. The statistical information is out of date, but generally speaking, some of it is helpful. The final eight-page chapter describes employment opportunities in which foreign language is a supplementary skill. There are fourteen appendixes, some bibliographical in nature, and others are lists of useful addresses.

* Honig, Lucille J. and Richard I. Brod. *Foreign Languages and Careers.* 2nd ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 1979.

This booklet was first published in 1974 by the MLA. I have the first edition and have seen the second in the library. The first edition has four parts: Introduction, Language as Auxiliary Skill, Language as Primary Skill, Summary, plus a booklist and a list of useful addresses.

The authors discuss results of a survey of American business, industry and service organizations conducted by the MLA in 1972. They do not indicate what percentage of the questionnaires they sent out were actually answered. They do say that 70 percent of the respondents said, "they do use, could use, or expect to use people with foreign language skills." This booklet is derived from that survey.

The purpose of the booklet is to explain "why so many different types of people in so many different parts of the country need language in their work, and why students planning their education in preparation for certain kinds of careers should be aware of these needs. The focus is mainly on language as an auxiliary skill--on the careers in which languages are most likely to be needed, and on ways in which foreign language skills can help in individual jobs" (p. 7). The authors fulfill that purpose; however, we now need a revised, current report.

* Bourgoin, Edward. *Foreign Languages and Your Career.* 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Columbia Language Services, 1981. 74 pp.

This book is divided into two parts and four appendixes. Part I discusses careers in business, education and government in which the primary skill may be accounting, sales, management, etc., and the secondary skill is proficiency in one or more foreign languages.

Part II discusses careers in which foreign language is the primary skill, i.e. foreign language teaching, translating, and interpreting.

The appendixes give addresses of agencies and organizations concerned with overseas teaching and research, sources of information on TESOL programs, a list of

international organizations that need health workers and social service volunteers, and a list of professional organizations of translators and interpreters.

Edward Bourgoin published a third edition in 1984 by the same company. It consists of ten chapters and four appendixes, plus an index of occupations, a feature not included in the second edition. The third edition has a total of 100 pages compared to 74 in the second edition. The main value of this book is that it provides an overview of the great variety of careers open to people with linguistic skills and also supplies a plethora of bibliographic information and useful addresses.

* Huebener, Theodore. *Opportunities in Foreign Language Careers*. Lincolnwood, IL: VGM Career Horizons, 1983. 150 pp.

Very similar editions of this book were published in 1964, 1975, and 1980. Huebener's book has seven chapters in the 1975 and 1983 printings. They deal with the field of foreign languages, educational preparation, finding your job, opportunities in foreign trade, in various vocations, in government positions and in teaching. The book is intended for vocational guidance personnel in high school.

* Phillips, David Atlee. *Careers in Secret Operations*. Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984. 93 pp.

This is a factual, concise description of career opportunities in federal intelligence work. Mr. Phillips, a retired GS-18 intelligence officer, separates fact from fiction for the aspiring intelligence officer. He details how, where, and when to apply for positions with the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Dept. of the Treasury, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the State Department. The author gives excellent suggestions for addtional reading.

* Arnold, Edwin and Theodore Huebener. *Opportunities in Foreign Language Careers*. Lincolnwood, IL: VGM Career Horizons, 1986. 148 pp.

This is a revised version of Huebener's 1983 book. In some chapters there are substantial revisions. The statistical information is updated. It contains a bibliography and 23 pages of appendixes.

* Edwards, E.W. *Exploring Careers Using Foreign Languages*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 1986. 123 pp.

This is, perhaps, the best single volume for advising high school and college students. It contains a good introduction outlining some of the characteristics of successful polyglots. There are seven chapters: Acquiring and Using Languages, Teaching a Foreign Language, Translation and Interpretation, Business and Finance, Careers in Government, Communications and the Media, and Other Career Options. Appendixes contain a model contract for translators, sample resumes, suggested reading, a list of specialized agencies of the U.N. and other international organizations, and some test samples.

The business and finance chapter is weak because it lacks specific information on which languages are in most demand. The communications and media chapter is somewhat limited because it concentrates mainly on the medium of radio. It does discuss the film industry, publishing and journalism; however, it lacks adequate converage of television.

Cont. on p. 6

* Relac, Richard S. and Wanda M. Korwin, eds. *Career Opportunities for Linguists in the Federal Service*. Washington, D.C.: The Society of Federal Linguists, Inc., 1986. 44 pp.

This document is a published report of a public forum of the same title, held on Saturday, September 15, 1984, in the Barnard Auditorium of the U.S. Department of Education.

The panelists included representatives of Federal agencies which employ the majority of career civilian linguists in the U.S. government: State Department, Foreign Service, U.S.I.A. (now I.C.A.), VOA, NSA, FBI, CIA, FBIS, and JPRS.

The languages which are in greatest demand by Federal agencies are: 1) Russian and other Slavic languages; 2) Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages; 3) Chinese, Japanese, and other Oriental languages.

* Spencer, Samia I., ed. *Foreign Languages and International Trade*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

Samia Spencer brings together foreign language professors, other educators, politicians, government officials, and business professionals to address the problem of the language deficit in American education and business. To begin to solve the problem, various contributors to this volume argue for the importance of foreign language education in schools and colleges. They discuss teaching techniques for the business community, the creation of in-house foreign language studies at American corporations involved in international trade, the folly and the perils of cultural isolationism and the need to educate the business community in the protocol of the nations they trade with, the current status of foreign trade in specific states, and the importance of strengthening the language programs at American universities.

The most important part of the book with reference to career for our linguistically talented students is section five, entitled "Foreign Languages and Careers." It contains six chapters of six to seven pages each on foreign languages and careers in travel and tourism, multinational corporations, government, exporting, marketing, and international insurance.

The book as a whole is a valuable and current contribution to our awareness of the magnitude of internatonal trade and the pressing need for internationally oriented graduates with practical language skills.

* Schisgall, Laura J., ed. *Guide to Careers in World Affairs*. New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1987. 325 pp.

This book explains how to develop custom-designed job-hunting methods and specific credentials for international careers. Chapter I gives suggestions on job-hunting methods and strategies. Chapters 2 through 11, written by outstanding leaders in each field, describe the nature of the work, the employment qualifications, the range of opportunities (with particular emphasis on entry-level and mid-level jobs) and offers suggestions on the best way to conduct a job hunt. These chapters include profiles of representative organizations and firms.

Each chapter gives information about specific firms' international activities and their departments in charge of international operations. A professional staff section gives the number of staff in the U.S. and abroad, whether they are mainly foreign nationals or American citizens, the number of people hired in the past year, and the locations of overseas offices. The qualifications section for each firm includes education requirements for employment, the amount of work experience desired, the knowledge of specific languages, willingness to live and travel abroad, and overseas experience. Each chapter includes a section on application procedures.

Information is provided on training programs and internships. Chapter 12 lists 40 internship programs in the fields covered in the book. Chapter 13 discusses the pros and cons of different graduate programs. Chapter 14 includes an annotated bibliography of 123 items. For its sheer quantity and quality of information this book is a bargain for $10.95.

I would like to thank Jerry Weatherford [ed. of *The Beacon*] for bringing a number of these titles to my attention. He also informed me about the *International Jobs Bulletin.* Ed. Note: Much of this information came from Judy Schomber [co-ed. of *The Beacon*]. It is published by the University Placement Center, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 63901. It is published on a bi-weekly basis and is available at the rate of $20.oo for 20 issues. It lists job opportunities with United Nations and government agencies and private corporations. It describes the functions of each position, the essential qualifications, the languages required and proficiency levels, and where to apply for the position. For active international jobseekers it is well worth the price.

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